May 14, 2026

Quick facts about Christ Lutheran Church and its affiliated/ incorporated ministries

I. Christ Lutheran Church

- The synod had rented a hall at 1240 Light Street near Ostend Street for $20.00 a month including heat and utilities, arranged for chairs provided, and allocated $100 for other necessities required for the initial work
- First service 96 people gathered on December 18, 1887, on snowstorm, with zero-degree temperature
- Formally organized on Sunday February 5, 1888.
- The current site was purchased for $8000 from the New Sailors' City Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church on Hill Street near Charles (one of the oldest church buildings in the city).
- By 1907 attendance on Sunday averaged well over 700, with 225 on the Sunday School roll.
- By 1925 became the largest Lutheran church in the city with 2000 members
- Revolutionary motto--. "Every seat free —Everybody welcome"
- "Daddy Pastor" Dr. Zimmermann retired on April 19, 1925.

Served by long tenured Senior/ Lead Pastors.

1. The Rev. Dr. Leander M. Zimmerman (1887 -1925)
2. The Rev. Dr. Oscar F. Blackwelder (1925 – 1933)
3. The Rev. Dr. John Deaton (1933-1960)
4. The Rev. Dr. Warren C. Johnson (1961-1964)
5. The Rev. Dr. Carl W. Folkemer (1965 – 1982)
6. The Rev. Dr. John R. Sabatelli (1983-2012)
7. The Rev. Susan Tjornehoj (2012-2019)
8. The Rev. Dr. Amsalu T. Geleta (2021- current), previously an intern (2005-2006, and Associate Pastor 2013-2017)

Major events

- Parish house dedicated on June 14, 1936
- Groundbreaking for the main nave was October 1955 and the first service in new building was held on May 18, 1958.
- A 16-bell carillon in 1958
- in 1965 the Greater Christ Church Committee was formed to make a thorough study of the pressing physical and spiritual needs in the Baltimore area and to identify ways that the congregation could help meet them.

- After extensive negotiations for funding with city, state, and federal governmental agencies, the Christ Church Complex was proposed. Components were to include the church, the Dr. John L. Deaton Medical Center, affiliated with University Hospital to provide quality medical and nursing care; an apartment building for elderly people with low and middle incomes and adults with disabilities of any age; a beautiful plaza; and an underground garage.
- April 1969 Houses on Hill St, across from the church were demolished.

II. John L Deaton Medical Center

- was opened with 220 beds in 1973
- In 1986 the medical center expanded with a loan of $15,800,000 to add 120 beds.
- Sold to University of Maryland (UMMS): July 1996
- Deaton was sold and Christ Lutheran Church Foundation was created in 1996.
    - July 2001 Nursing home services are closed
        - October 2001 Name changed to University Specialty Hospital

III. Christ Church Foundation

- was established in 1996 with money from the sale of Deaton Medical Center with approximately $10,800,000.

IV. Christ Church Harbor Apartments

The $ 6.1 million Christ Church Harbor Apartments opened in 1973 with 288 one bedroom and efficiency apartments, each with a balcony facing the redeveloped Inner Harbor or the Christ Church Plaza, an underground parking garage, and a beautifully landscaped plaza and fountain. Christ Lutheran Foundation

V. Baltimore Outreach services

The non-profit Baltimore Outreach Services was formally incorporated and September 13, 2002. This ministry provides emergency shelter, food, clothing, housing, job training, advocacy, substance abuse counseling, tutoring, and other supportive services to women and their children experiencing homelessness.

VI. Charles Light Parking Garage

- This garage is part of the broader Charles Center redevelopment in downtown Baltimore, which began in the late 1950s.
- The ground lease dated July 18, 1948,
- (Same lot recorded later February 18, 1955)
- *Incorporated on March 13th 1968*

- July 26, 1979 more lot was purchased and added
- Expanded by 20 parking space in 2017??

VII. Christ Lutheran Learning Center

- Was in operation as Christ Church Nursery School since 2002
- Incorporated as CLLC in 2023

VIII. Lutheran Center at Christ Church

- The Lutherans officially **broke ground** for the Lutheran Center at Christ Church in downtown Baltimore on **July 6, 1998**.
- The **five-story** building (it ended up being six stories) was completed and dedicated on **October 24, 1999**, during a celebration led by the ELCA Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson.
- The 47,000-square foot building housed four organizations: Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA, and the Maryland Regional Office of Daikon Lutheran Services.